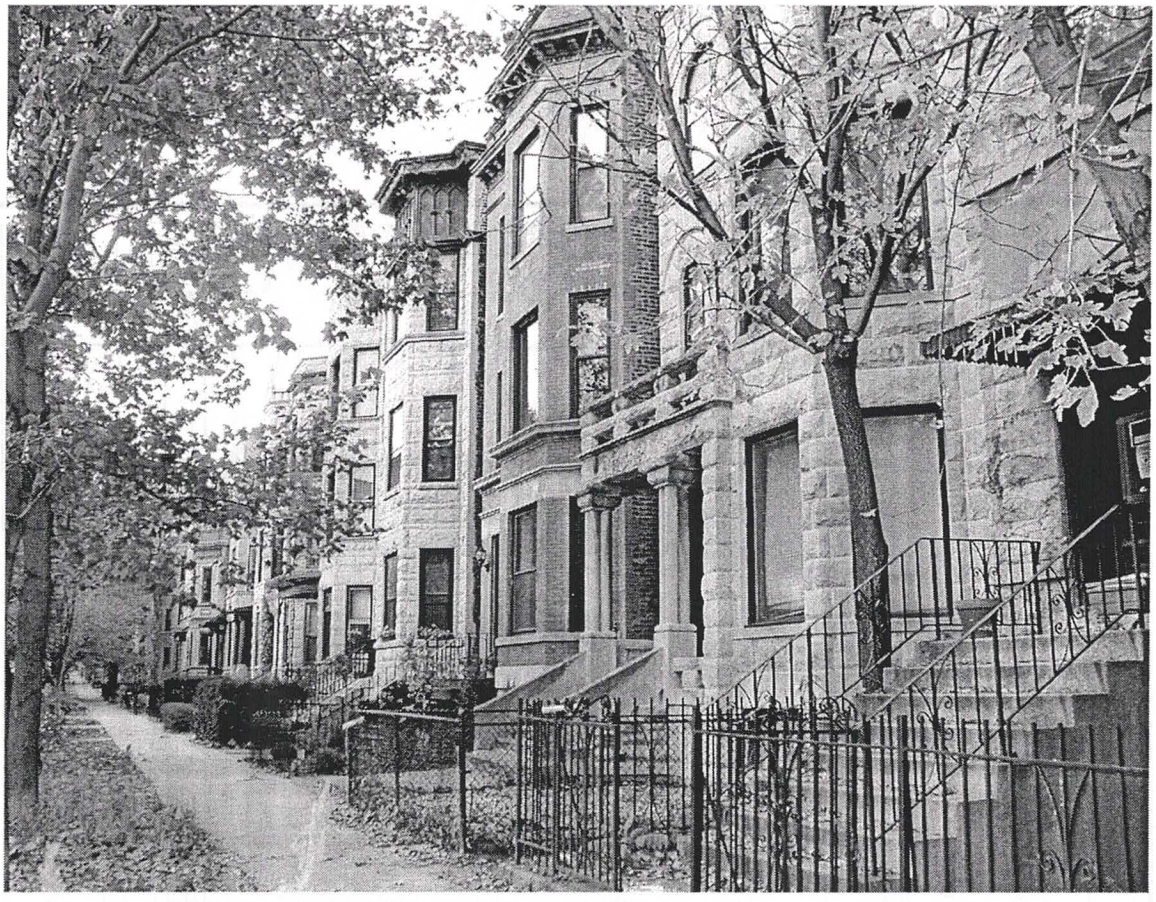
LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



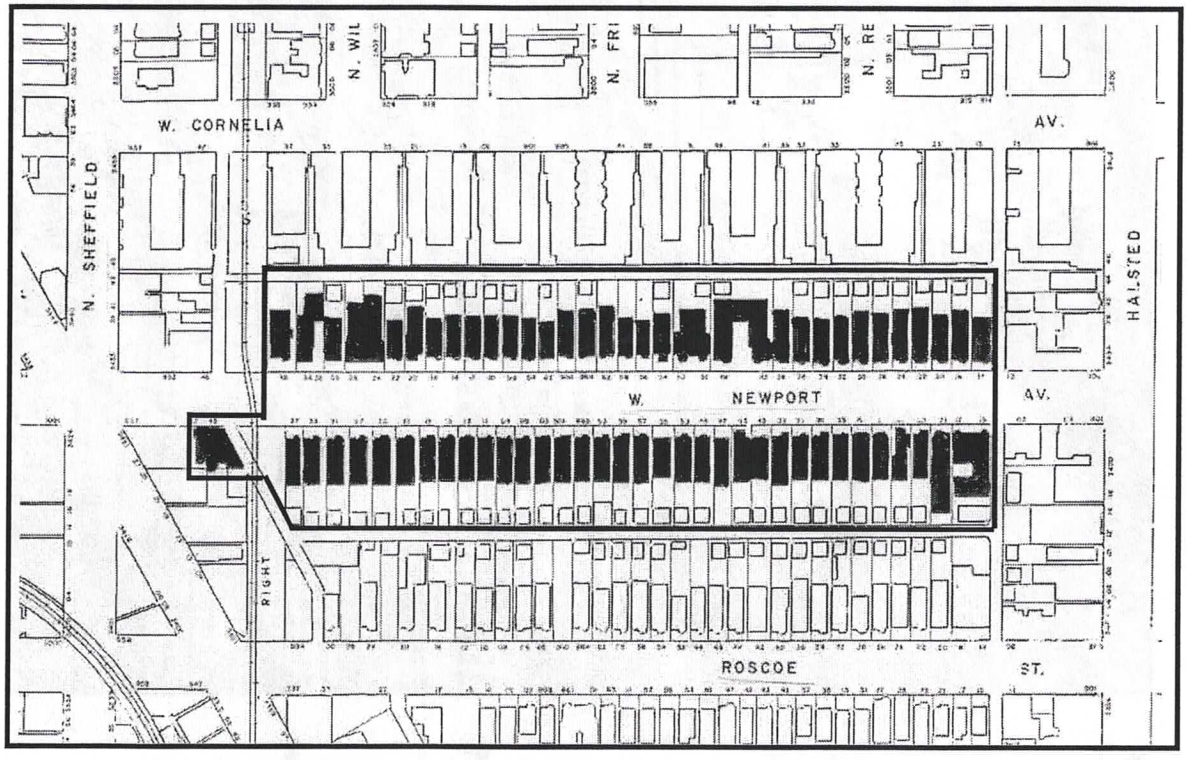
Newport Avenue District

West Newport Avenue Between Halsted and Clark Streets

Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, January 8, 2004

CITY OF CHICAGO
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

Department of Planning and Development
Denise M. Casalino, P.E., Commissioner



Top and Cover: The Newport Avenue District is located on West Newport Avenue between Halsted and Clark Streets in the Lake View neighborhood.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

NEWPORT AVENUE DISTRICT

WEST NEWPORT AVENUE BETWEEN HALSTED AND CLARK STREETS

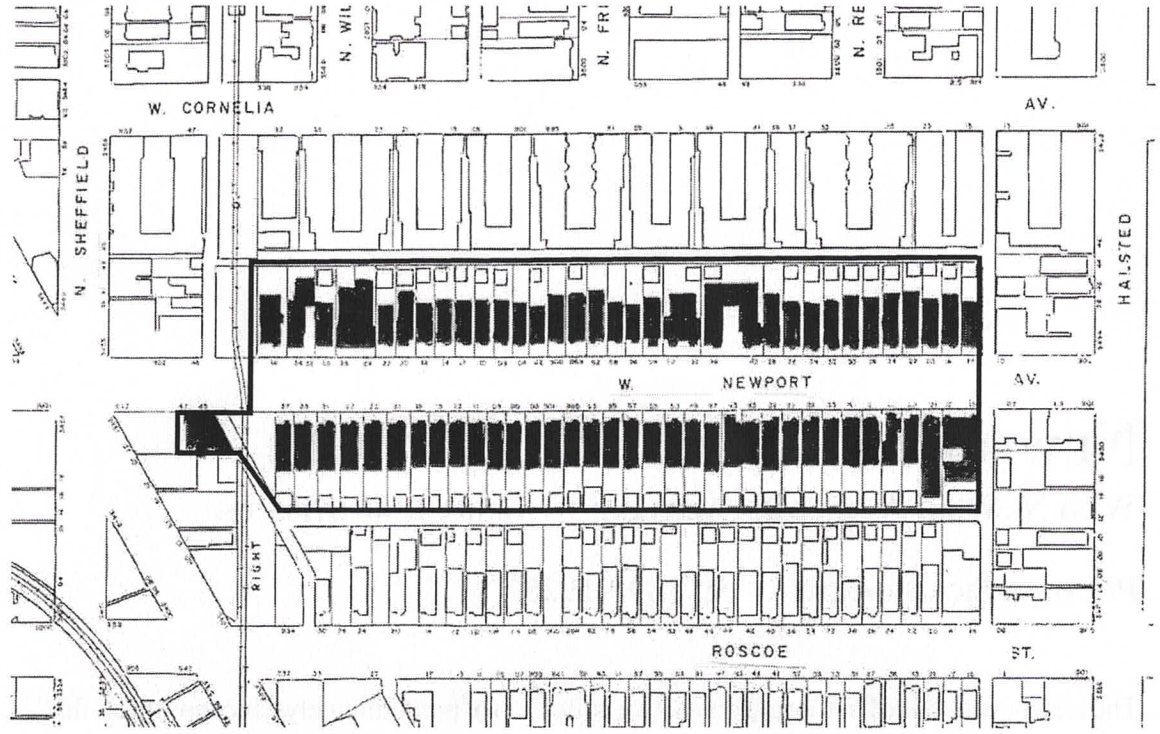
PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: c. 1891-1928

The Newport Avenue District is a distinctive collection of predominately Chicago "three-flat" apartment buildings that exemplifies the growth and development of the Lake View community area in the years immediately following its annexation by Chicago in 1889. The District's 67 buildings form an especially cohesive residential streetscape that gives an onlooker an excellent feel for the craftsmanship and intimate scale of the residences constructed in middle- and working-class neighborhoods such as Lake View that developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

This remarkably intact block includes single-family residences from the early 1890s, fine three-flats constructed from the 1890s-1910s, and small apartment buildings that completed the development of the block up to the 1920s. Many such residential areas emerged during Chicago's explosive population growth during this period as newcomers flooded into the City, but subsequent demolition and redevelopment have destroyed the historic visual character of many of these neighborhoods. The District is a significant intact group of such housing.

The growth of Lake View in general and Newport Avenue in particular during this period reflects the impact that improvements in mass transit had on development on Chicago's North Side. Improved transportation in the form of new and expanded street car lines and the developing rapid transit system, including the construction in the 1890s of the Northwestern Elevated Railroad (now the Chicago Transit Authority's Red Line), was instrumental in attracting residents to what had been an outlying suburban town.

Construction of the first large group of buildings on Newport coincided with the land survey, acquisition, and construction of the elevated rail line, which began in 1894 and ended with the line's opening in 1900. The Clark Street Station, once located at the intersection of Newport and Clark at the western end of the District, provided ready access to the Loop and the rest of Chicago for local residents.



Top: A map of the Newport Avenue District. The district is located in the Lakeview neighborhood on Chicago's North Side. Above: The district contains a significant concentration of predominately three-flat apartment buildings from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Newport Avenue District also exemplifies the ethnic diversity of Chicago's growing working- and middle-class neighborhoods in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as the rapidly growing City accommodated large numbers of first- and second-generation immigrant families eager for attractive yet affordable housing. By 1900 large numbers of immigrants and newcomers moved into more comfortable housing away from the crowded tenements of the inner city. Today the detached houses, flats, and apartment buildings still display the fine detailing and high quality materials that appealed to families a century ago. The District's buildings provided a variety of housing options including the opportunity for homeownership to both native-born citizens and several nationalities, with Swedish and German families predominating.

History and Development of Lake View

The North Side community of Lake View that we know today is a fraction of the much larger Lake View Township that once extended as far north as Devon Avenue. The first European settlers to the area were Swiss-born Conrad Sulzer and his wife Christine. In 1836, the Sulzers journeyed beyond the then-forests of the northern limits (roughly North Avenue) of the newly incorporated City of Chicago and established a 100-acre farm along the "Ridge," near what is now the intersection of Montrose Avenue and Clark Street. In the years that followed, the fertile land of the Ridge was slowly settled by German and Swedish farmers.

The area's sandy marsh land along the northern shores of Lake Michigan remained vacant until 1853, when James Rees, a prominent surveyor and real estate speculator, bought 225 acres of lakefront property north of Belmont Avenue to develop as a country retreat. In 1854, Rees built a grand hotel with a veranda that offered a sweeping view of Lake Michigan. The hotel, located in the vicinity of what is now Grace Street and Sheridan Road, became known as the Lake View House and the surrounding area was dubbed Lake View Township. Many wealthy Chicagoans were attracted to the beauty of the rural, unspoiled lakeshore and built large summer homes near the Lake View House.

The Township of Lake View was officially organized in 1857. Its original boundaries stretched from Fullerton Avenue (the Chicago city limits) north to Devon Avenue and from the lakefront west to the North Branch of the Chicago River. From 1865, when the Township was incorporated as the town of Lake View, through the 1870s, the area west of Broadway (then Evanston Street) was predominately farmland. Known as "The Celery Capital of the United States," Lake View was largely dominated by farms.

After the Fire of 1871, residential development expanded to the northern city limits at Fullerton Avenue; development of modest wood-frame dwellings in Lake View increased near this border due to the need for affordable housing after Chicago building codes were amended to prohibit frame construction within much of the City. (As a suburban town, Lake View was not subject to City building code requirements.) Still, Lake View as a whole remained sparsely populated, with streets for the most part unpaved with open ditches along either side.

In the 1880s and 90s, the establishment of several large industrial plants, including brick and terra cotta manufacturers, along the southern boundaries of the neighborhood encouraged the development of nearby residential neighborhoods which consisted of moderately-priced wood-frame homes. Also during this time, the earlier settlement along the lake shore sparked the creation of residential subdivisions in eastern Lake View that gradually expanded to the south and west.

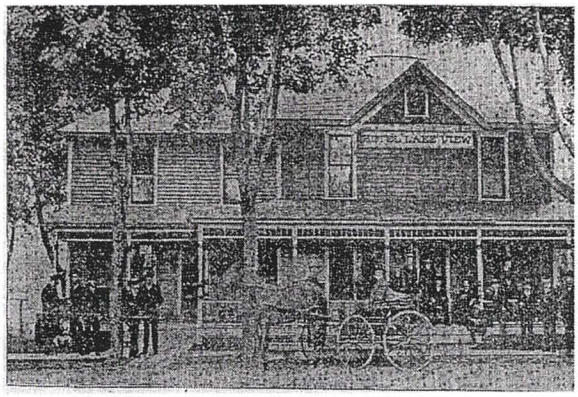
In 1887 the town of Lake View was incorporated as a city electing its own mayor and city council. Two years later in 1889, Lake View was annexed to the City of Chicago. Considerable building activity in the community occurred during the period of 1885 to 1894 as residential building boomed and the population soared. The *Chicago Land Use Survey*, conducted in 1940 and published in 1942, estimated that 43 percent of all homes in Lake View were built between 1880 and 1894.

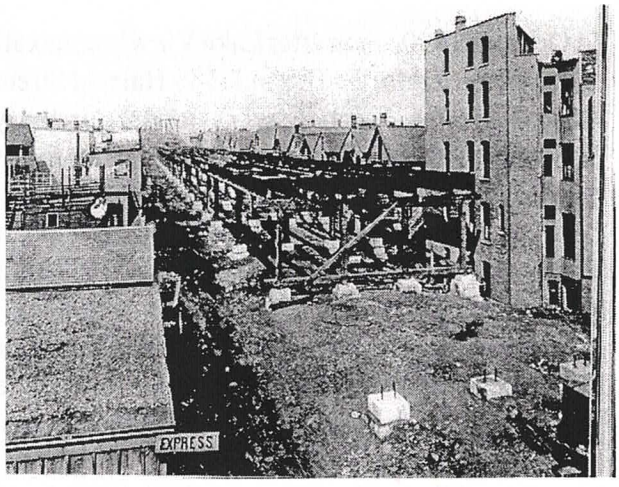
This development was encouraged by improvements in mass transportation. By 1894, within only five years of annexation, by 1894 slow horsecar lines on Clark St. (then called Green Bay Rd.) and Halsted St. (the two main streets framing the Newport Avenue District) were upgraded to electric streetcars. Within two more years, Broadway also saw faster streetcars replace horse-drawn cars.

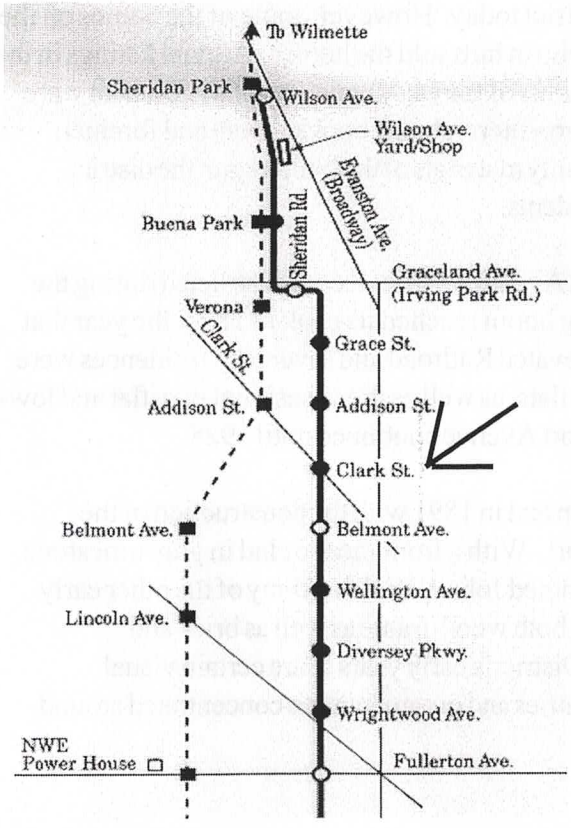
Even more dramatic was the real estate development in eastern Lake View in the 1890s and early 1900s that was spurred by the construction of a North-Side elevated line to match others being built on the South and West Sides. Development of the Northwestern Elevated Railroad (now the Red Line of the Chicago Transit Authority) began in 1894 when the City Council and Mayor John P. Hopkins approved a privately-operated rapid transit franchise for the company. Surveying for the new elevated railroad's right-of-way just east of Sheffield Avenue began the same year, but construction delays and financing problems pushed the actual opening of the line back to 1900. Despite these delays, many property owners and developers constructed new buildings or substantially expanded existing structures on blocks adjacent to the new elevated line's stations in anticipation of increased demand for housing.

One of these new stations was at the intersection of Newport and Clark Streets, at the western end of the District. Such easy proximity to rapid transit encouraged the rapid development of Newport with three-flat buildings that were relatively large in scale compared to earlier frame cottages and houses built in the area, maximizing the area's newly established attractiveness to both real estate buyers and renters. (The Clark station, as this station was called, was closed in July 1949, along with almost two dozen others in the City, after the Chicago Transit Authority was formed to take over operation of the City's privately-owned elevated railroads.)

By the 1920s, the residential areas of Lake View were almost fully developed. Census records show that its population, which had been steadily increasing, jumped from 60,535 to 96,482 in the decade between 1910 and 1920. With the exception of the factories and foundries of southwestern Lake View, the vast majority of the neighborhood essentially remained a working-class residential community.







The Chicago neighborhood of Lake View was originally a suburban township dotted with farms and scattered development. Top left: Conrad Sulzer was the original European settler in the area, establishing a farm in the township in 1836. Top right: The Lake View House, built in 1854 and located at Grace St. and Sheridan Rd., roughly a half-mile north of the Newport Avenue District, was a popular suburban retreat.

In the 1890s, after Lake View was annexed to Chicago in 1889, the Northwestern Elevated Railroad was built, encouraging real estate development on Newport Ave.. Left: A map of the line with its original stations, including Clark St. (arrow) at the western end of the district. Above: The elevated structure was constructed between 1894 and 1900.

Development History and Description of Buildings

Today the handsome buildings of the Newport Avenue District reflect the important history of the development of Lake View and the importance of working- and middle-class housing in late 19th- and early 20th-century Chicago. Built in architectural styles that were important in the development of Chicago residential architecture during the period of the District's development, these buildings display fine craftsmanship in brick, stone, wood, and metal. Even more significantly, the buildings found in the District form a coherent streetscape that is visually distinctive within the larger context of the Lake View community.

In October 1890, soon after Lake View's annexation, developer Jacob Feinberg paid $10,000 for a parcel of farmland bounded by Halsted Street, Cornelia Avenue, Clark Street, and Roscoe Avenue. Feinberg subdivided the property, previously the Schwartz Farm and Schrechle Grove, into the City's standard 25-foot-wide residential lots that comprise present day Newport Avenue (originally called Cleveland Avenue) and the north side of Roscoe Street between Halsted and Clark Streets. Narrow lots such as these encouraged the development of tightly spaced buildings, both houses and flat buildings, that still characterize Newport today. A uniform setback of twelve feet from the street also was established to give the street a distinct visual unity. (Although subdivided at the same time, Newport, with its many three-flats, developed differently than the north side of Roscoe, which was built up with a more varied mix of frame and brick houses and small flat buildings.)

Largely middle- and working class individuals bought lots in Feinberg's subdivision and built the majority of the structures that we see in the District today. However, some of the homes on the block were developed by real estate investors who in turn sold the homes. Annual listings in the *Lakeside City Directory* show that the occupations of the early residents of the District were generally those of skilled craftsmen, masons, carpenters, clerks, bookkeepers and foremen. Today the workmanship, detailing, and high-quality materials of the buildings in the district reflects the values of its early working-class residents.

More than half of the residences in the Newport Avenue District were constructed during the five-year period of 1891 to 1895. This building boom reached its peak in 1894, the year that surveying commenced for the Northwestern Elevated Railroad and seventeen residences were completed. The construction of Chicago three-flats, as well as the occasional two-flat and low-rise apartment buildings, on this block of Newport Avenue continued until 1928.

Development in the District began on its western end in 1891 with the construction of the masonry two-story residence at 930 W. Newport. With a front facade clad in gray limestone, this "greystone" building was built for a clerk named John J. Walsh. Many of the other early buildings are single-family structures, including both wood-frame as well as brick and graystone-clad houses. The homes built in the District's early years share certain visual characteristics, including asymmetrical raised entries and ornamentation concentrated around entryways, cornices, and parapets.

Two views of the Newport Avenue District. The district consists of 67 buildings, with over four-fifth's being three-flat buildings.

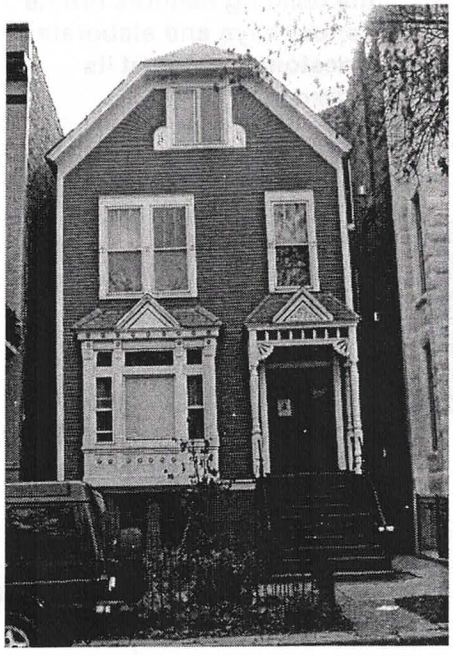
Chicago three-flats comprise over eighty percent of the structures in the Newport Avenue District. These buildings also feature gracious raised entries that, along with the single family residences, underscore the unified visual character of in the Newport Avenue District. Many of the three-flat stoops have a set of limestone stairs with either limestone or cast-iron railings leading to a small porch. The porch is often flanked by two columns, usually either Classical or Romanesque in detail. Porch roofs typically are ornamented with wrought-iron or limestone railings, with the latter often punctuated by arched or rectangular openings. 816, 826 and 921 W. Newport are just three representative examples.

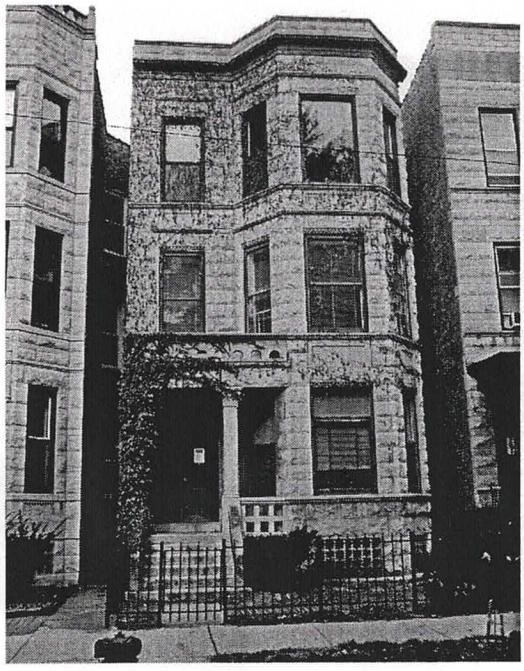
Building features common to many of the flats on the block are projecting bays and cornices. An elaborately-detailed bay ornamenting 834 W. Newport is crafted of stamped metal and features floral motifs. It is somewhat unusual for the District, though, as most of the bays found within the District are clad with masonry, either brick or stone. Many of the brick and limestone-fronted flats in the District have bays that are articulated at each level by horizontal banding. This is especially evident in the buildings at 908-914 W. Newport, all of which are similarly detailed and many of which contain their original entrance porches. In addition, most buildings within the District were originally topped by ornate pressed-metal cornices. Although some have been removed (a common occurrence for 19th-century Chicago buildings), many others remain.

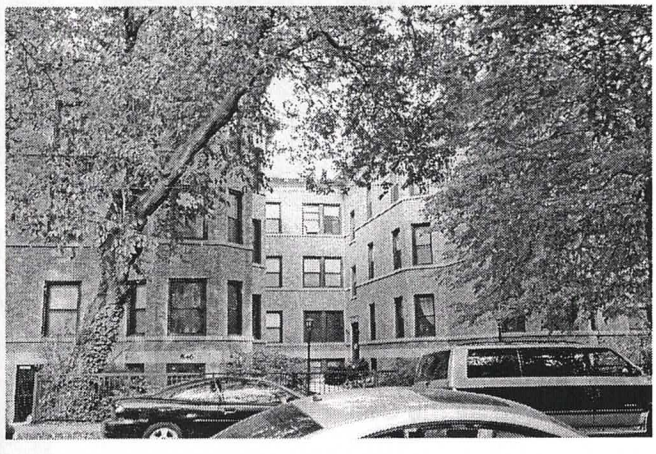
Much of the beauty of the District's buildings is due to the use of materials—brick, stone, and metal—used for their construction. Many are faced in rusticated limestone with fine carved floral and geometric motifs and are often capped by copper cornices. An example of this can be seen in the row of flats at 927-937 W. Newport, with all almost identical in their configuration. One of the finest limestone-clad buildings is the Vautravers apartment building located at 947-949 W. Newport. This rusticated Romanesque apartment building from the district's earliest period of development features copper bays detailed in floral and geometric motifs as well as an arched, pedimented entranceway. The bracketed cornice, like many others in the District, is made of pressed copper, and caps the three-story building.

Another common material found in the District is brick. Many of the flats detailed in this material are simpler than their limestone counterparts, yet they still include similar proportions and decorative elements. These buildings also depend on the intrinsic visual characteristics of brick with its visual warmth and textures. Brick is also used for the larger apartment buildings, many of which were constructed later and are simpler in their detailing. 815-817 W. Newport, erected in 1909, is an example that employs brick as its primary material with simple limestone lintels at the second floor and an elegant double-arched limestone entranceway.

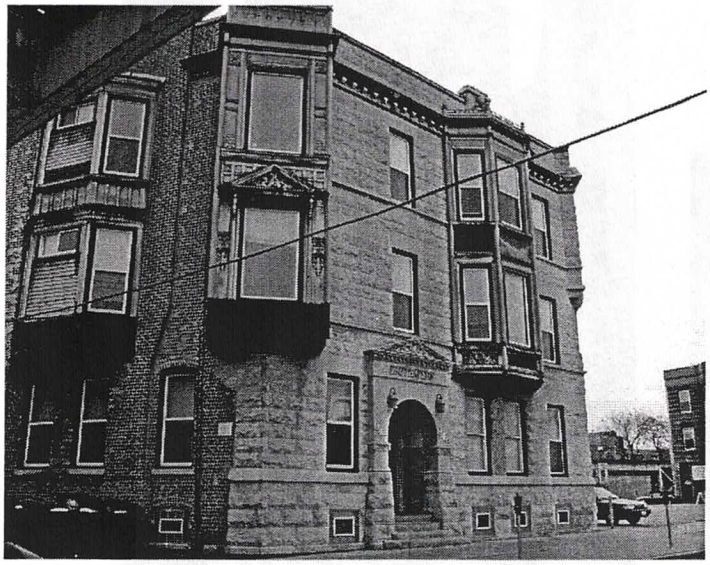
The District's houses and apartment buildings, including the three-flats that predominate, exhibit a mix of stylistic influences. Such visual eclecticism is a characteristic of much late 19th- and early 20th-century architecture, especially those buildings found in Chicago's neighborhoods. Many small-scale Chicago buildings of this period are not pure examples of any one style, but incorporate ornamental motiffs that recall particular styles, including Queen Anne, Eastlake, Romanesque, Classical Revival, and Arts-and-Crafts. Elements from each style were used



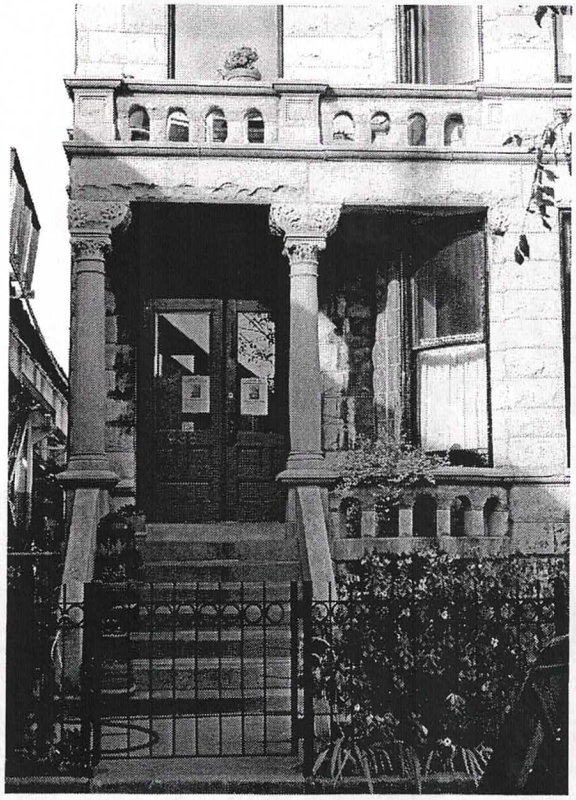




The Newport Avenue District is made up of several building types found in Chicago neighborhoods, including (top left) single-family houses (855 W. Newport); (top right) "greystone" Chicago three-flats (826 W. Newport); (above left) brick Chicago three-flats (845 W. Newport); (middle right) six-flats (815-817 W. Newport); and (above right) a courtyard apartment building (842-846 W. Newport).



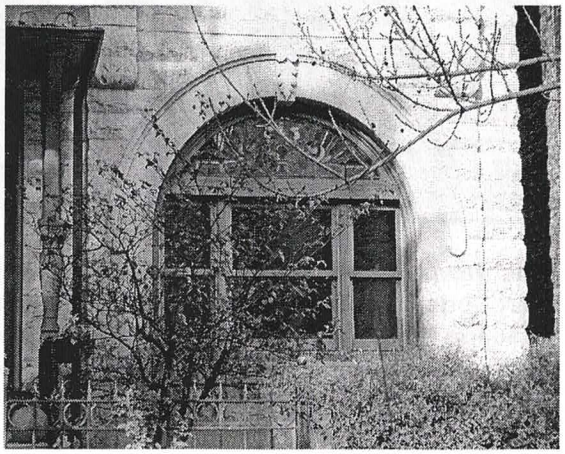
Above left: 947-949 W. Newport is the earliest apartment building in the District. Built as the Vautravers Apartments, the building features ornate copper bays and elaborate limestone carving at its entrance.



Below left: Located at 938 West Newport, this single-family home is clad in rusticated limestone and has details influenced by the Queen Anne and Romanesque styles.

Above right: 924-926 West Newport, constructed in 1928, features limestone detailing inspired by the Gothic Revival style.

Below right: Arched window detail of 930 West Newport which features delicate foliate limestone carving and a stained glass transom window.



sparingly or in a more simplified fashion to embellish the basic form of buildings, including the three-flats and other apartment buildings that predominate on the street.

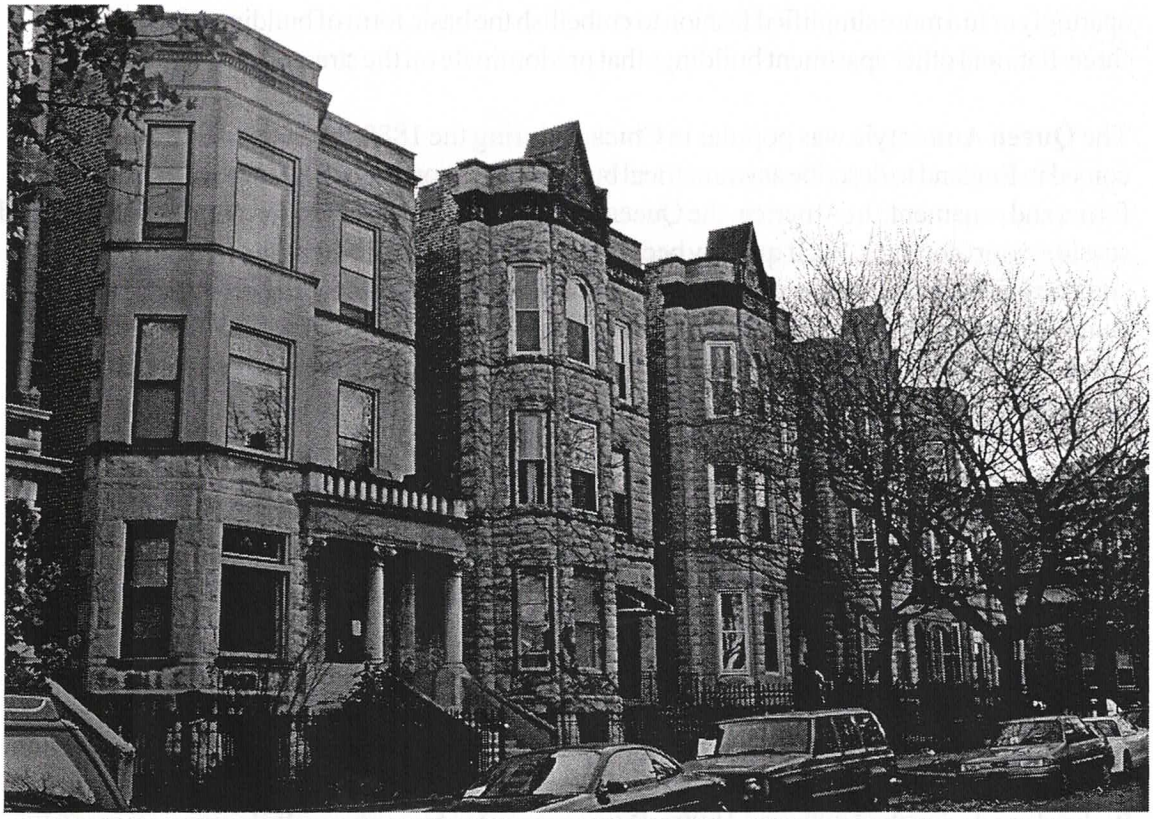
The **Queen Anne** style was popular in Chicago during the 1880s and 90s. The name was coined in England to describe asymmetrical buildings that combined medieval and classical forms and ornament. In America, the Queen Anne originally was used for suburban houses and seaside resort cottages, but it quickly became a popular style for both urban residences and commercial buildings that incorporate a plethora of historic detailing in their overall designs. Buildings in the District with Queen Anne-style ornament commonly have wooden details such as that on the house at 855 W. Newport or pressed-metal cornices with geometric ornament such as that found on the three-flat at 900 W. Newport.

A related style is the **Eastlake** style, named for Charles Eastlake, a popular writer on architecture and decorative style in the late 19th century. Eastlake urged the use of machine-made ornament, especially wooden posts and spindles shaped on mechanized lathes and geometric patterns shaped from wood by steam-powered jigsaws. Buildings with Eastlake ornament include 855, 905 and 933 W. Newport.

Romanesque-style architecture, based on 10th- and 11th-century medieval architecture, is perhaps the most common architectural stylistic influence on buildings in the District. The style was inspired by the popularity of buildings designed by Boston architect Henry Hobson Richardson during the 1880s and 1890s. Romanesque buildings typically have masonry walls, sometimes of brick, but often of rough-faced stone, and are ornamented with short robust-looking columns with floral capitals. The style commonly was used for churches and public buildings, as its rough masonry surfaces projected a sense of strength and permanence, but it also proved popular for houses and commercial buildings. Many of the buildings in the District, especially the graystone-fronted three-flat buildings, have Romanesque-style detailing in their rough-cut stone walls, round-arched windows, massive-looking porch railings and columns, and medieval foliate detailing. Three examples among many are 816, 911, and 938 W. Newport.

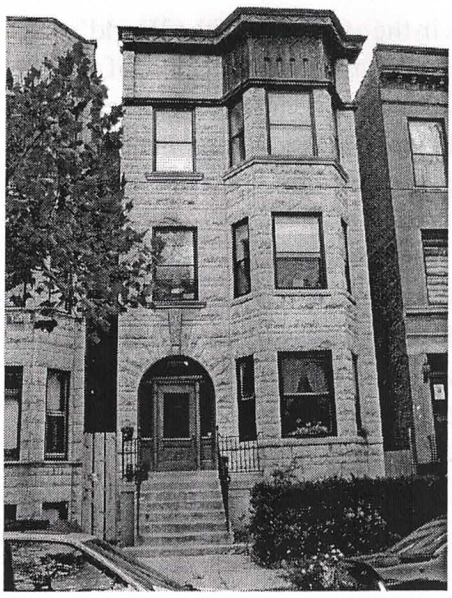
The **Classical Revival** style became popular in the 1890s in the aftermath of the World's Columbian Exposition, held in Chicago in 1893. Based on the Classical architecture of ancient Greece and Rome as well as later interpretations by Renaissance and Baroque architects, the Classical Revival style utilized forms such as triangular pediments, Classical columns and moldings, and keystone-embellished lintels. Buildings in the District with Classical detailing include 834, 862 and 915 W. Newport.

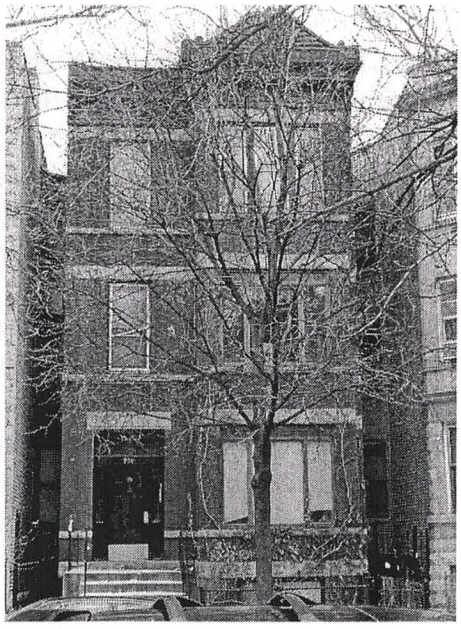
By the early 1900s, the **Arts and Crafts** movement had taken hold of popular American imagination. Inspired by progressive European architecture of the 1890s, Arts-and-Crafts architecture often was simply ornamented and without obvious historic ornament. Instead, the visual appeal of such buildings was based on the innate visual characteristics of building materials, including both color and texture. Buildings such as those at 850-852 and 842-846 W. Newport exhibit Arts-and-Crafts influences.



Above: This cohesive grouping of buildings at 925-931 West Newport on the south side of the street is characteristic of the District. Each building in this photograph is clad in limestone with fine carving influenced by an eclectic mix of styles such as Classical Revival and Romanesque.

Below left: 822 West Newport is clad in rusticated limestone and features many of its original details, including the arched entranceway and wood doors and original pressed metal cornice with geometric detailing. The brick three-flat at 900 West Newport has limestone lintels and banding as well as a bold pressed metal cornice.





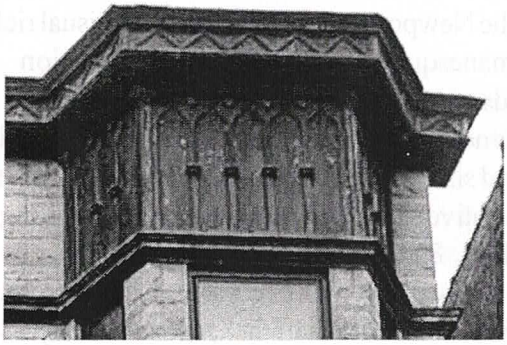
These architectural styles give the buildings in the Newport Avenue District their visual richness and character. For example, characteristic Romanesque-style elements such as cushion capitals, decorative plaques, and arch surrounds were used on buildings such as 816 W. Newport. Similarly, Classically-influenced elements were applied to other structures, as in 864 W. Newport, with its Ionic entrance columns and simple dentil-embellished cornice. Cornices and other crowning elements are especially indicative of the block, where several buildings have simple cornices detailed with dentils and brackets. 822 W. Newport features a bold, geometric cornice, and buildings such as 830 and 838 are both capped with decorative limestone finials. The three-flat at 823 W. Newport exhibits some characteristics of the Queen Anne style with its peaked bay and patterned masonry detailing but also shows German derived influences in its gable and arched windows. Also influenced by the Queen Anne, the free-standing home at 938 W. Newport features a rusticated stone base with stylized Corinthian columns and elaborate stone carving in the tympanum of the gable. Later three-flats such as 854 W. Newport exhibit the straight forward expression of materials in a manner reflective of the Arts-and-Crafts style.

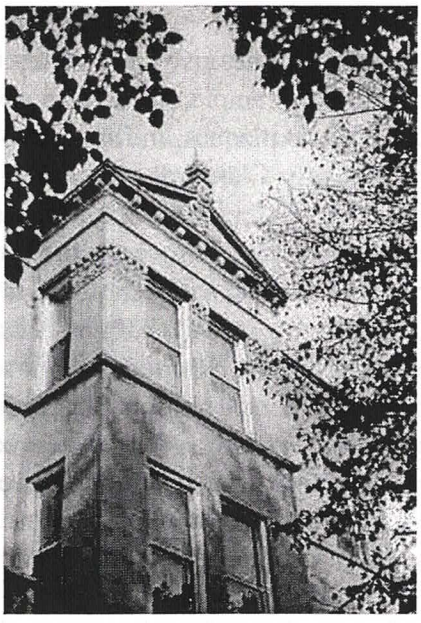
There are four six-flats and small apartment buildings within the Newport Avenue District, all tied to the later wave of construction from 1907 to 1928. Their presence, indicates the increase in population density in the area as Lake View continued to develop into the 20th century. Designed to reflect the height and scale of neighboring three-flats, the six-flats and small apartment buildings were constructed with similar high-quality materials that allowed them to gently blend into the already established streetscape. Unusual stylistic influences such as Gothic-inspired geometric ornament is evident in the apartment building at 924-926 W. Newport. Constructed in 1928, the apartment features limestone detail and a castellated parapet. The 1916 apartment building at 850-852 W. Newport also features a castellated roofline with simple limestone detailing and geometric brick patterning.

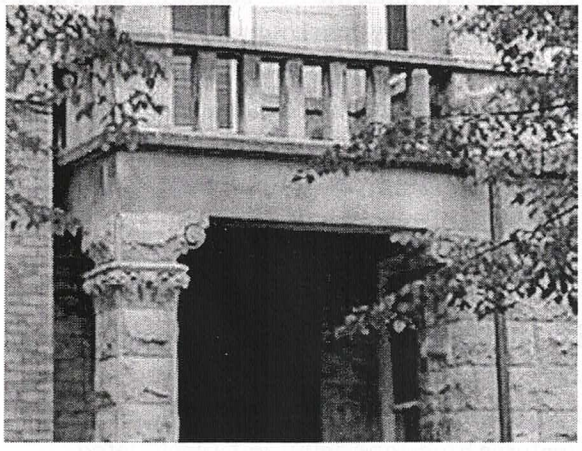
Taken as a whole, the Newport Avenue District exemplifies the visual coherence and attractiveness of late 19th- and early 20th-century architectural design as applied to Chicago neighborhood buildings. Individual buildings are handsomely detailed with historic ornament and beautifully-crafted materials. They share common scale, setbacks, and attitudes concerning use of traditional materials (brick, stone, wood, and metal). The streetscape of the District exemplifies the ability of individual late 19th- and early 20th-century developers, architects, and builders to create a visually consistent and satisfying whole out of distinctively- designed individual buildings. The District's unusual concentration of three-flats and lack of later buildings contribute to this overall fine sense of coherent historic development.

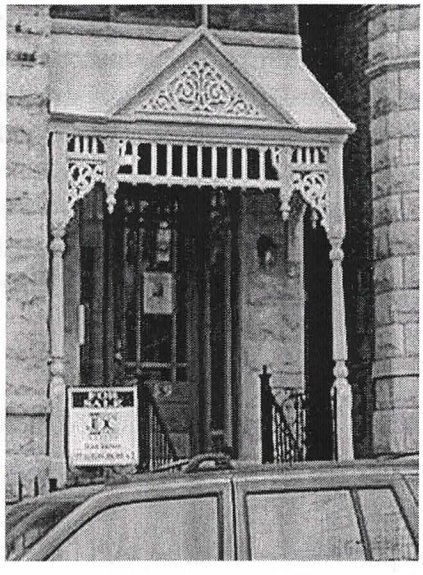
Chicago "Flat" Buildings and the Development of Chicago Neighborhoods in the 1890s and Early 1900s

The Newport Avenue District, with its rows of tightly-spaced three-flats and other apartment buildings, reflects the increasing density and building scale that many once-outlying suburban areas developed upon their annexation by Chicago in 1889. These neighborhoods, especially









The buildings in the Newport Avenue District possess handsome detailing crafted from traditional building materials such as stone, wood, brick and metal.

those with ready access to downtown through newly established streetcar and elevated lines, developed with buildings that reflected both the increasing land values of these areas and the middle- and working-class Chicagoans, many of them immigrants, that wanted attractive yet affordable housing.

In Chicago, as in many growing American cities, free-standing single-family houses and row houses, the long-time staples of housing, were being supplemented by the development of small two- and three-story apartment buildings. Such buildings, including two-, three-, six-flats, and a variety of other apartment building types, including corner, common corridor, and courtyard buildings, became staples in the development of late 19th- and early 20th-century Chicago neighborhoods. Newport, with its unusual predominance of three-flat buildings built principally between 1891 and 1919, is a visually distinctive example of this important aspect of Chicago neighborhood development.

The apartment building as a housing type is ancient, dating back at least to ancient Rome and its many *insulae*, or multi-story brick apartment blocks. In America however, apartment buildings did not begin to be built until the 19th century when both population growth and land and building costs worked together to create a need for multi-family residential buildings. In the country's early years of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, even its largest cities such as New York and Boston were made up mostly of single-family houses and row houses. Individuals and families that either did not want or could not afford such housing usually rented rooms in houses; the term "apartment" originally referred to a room in a house set aside for a separate occupant, rather than a coherent suite of rooms physically separate from others like it under a common roof and with common service spaces such as vestibules and hallways.

By the mid-19th century, land and building costs were changing the ways people lived. Initially the largest number of early multi-family buildings in industrial cities such as New York and Chicago were tenements housing numerous poor families, many of whom were immigrants. Apartment buildings had become known popularly as "French flats" due to the preponderance of apartment buildings in Paris and were seen as somehow un-American and not considered suitable housing.

Small apartment buildings with relatively spacious apartments, such as those found in the buildings along Newport, began to be built only as middle- and upper-class tastes began to change. As single-family houses on individual lots became prohibitively expensive to all but the wealthy, and even attached row houses began to be beyond the reach of middle-class incomes, apartment buildings became more acceptable. For working- and middle-class families, these buildings offered and alternative to tenement buildings and the overcrowded culture of the slums.

During the latter half of the 19th century, small walk-up apartment buildings of two- to five-stories began to be built in many American cities. For example, four- and five-story apartment buildings in New York began to rise next to brownstone and brick row houses. In Boston, freestanding wood "triple-deckers," apartment buildings similar to Chicago's three-flat buildings, became common. Many middle-class Washington D.C. residents dwelled in three-story attached brick buildings known locally as "rowhouse flats."

These small apartment buildings in general had apartments with greater square footage and larger rooms than those in tenement buildings. Ventilation was better, with each room having at least one window, and up-to-date amenities such as steam heat were the rule. These buildings were most often built by commercial builders who soon developed standardized floor plans and apartment features based on local demand. They often were bought by individual owners who occupied one apartment while renting out others. This allowed many middle-class families to become home owners despite rising urban housing costs.

Various configurations of apartment buildings began to be developed in Chicago by builders and developers eager to cater to buyers. In the 1870s and 80s, the most common were small, two- and three-story buildings that were slightly narrower than one standard Chicago lot (approximately 25 feet) in width allowing for narrow gangways on one or both sides of the building. Sometimes these buildings, especially those built along streets with streetcar lines, had shops on the first floor while apartments occupied upper floors. They were most often built of brick, sometimes with stone fronts, although wood remained common in outlying neighborhoods outside the so-called "fire limits" where city building codes mandated masonry construction in the wake of the Fire of 1871. These apartment buildings were usually built in the then-popular Italianate or Queen Anne styles.

When the Newport Avenue District began to be developed in the 1890s, small apartment buildings containing two or three apartments were becoming common in new middle- and working-class neighborhoods, and many residential streets were lined with such structures. These Chicago "two-flats" and "three-flats," as they have become known, were built with a wide variety of building details but usually followed certain basic configurations of form. They usually had rectangular floor plans with the narrow end facing the street, maximizing valuable street frontage, and were built one apartment per floor atop raised basements. Roofs were flat and brick, stone, or metal bays often projected towards the street, increasing available light and air for front rooms in the buildings. Wood or stone steps flanked with cast-iron railings typically led to a small front porch, with double doors set to one side of the building's front facade. The entrance doors, usually detailed with wood and glass panels, led to a small vestibule. The first-floor apartment opened directly onto this vestibule, while a staircase (accessed through a separate door) led to the upper-floor apartments.

These buildings were detailed in a variety of architectural styles, but most commonly had ornamental treatments that used simplified Romanesque or Classical-style details. The inherent visual qualities of building materials, such as rough-cut stone or the reds and browns of the brick commonly used for Chicago buildings, were often among the most striking visual qualities of such buildings built with modest budgets.

The Newport Avenue District is a significant grouping of Chicago three-flats, with all but thirteen of the district's 67 buildings being this type of structure. In the years both before and after World War I, other small-scale apartment types became popular as well, including "six-flats" as well as larger apartment buildings characterized by their overall configuration, such as "corner," "common corridor," and "courtyard" apartment buildings.

Six-flats such as the one located at 850-852 W. Newport, built in 1916, were slightly larger in scale than three-flats but shared many characteristics of design. They were three-story buildings, roughly two standard Chicago lots in width, and contained two apartments per floor accessed from a common centrally-located entrance and stairhall.

"Common corridor" buildings were typically located in the middle of residential blocks, had single, centrally-located entries to double-loaded corridors off which apartments were situated, and were similar in overall scale and footprints to six-flat buildings. The Gothic-detailed building at 924-926 W. Newport is a good example.

Courtyard apartment buildings were rarer, but were especially distinctive with their U- or E-shaped plans that wrapped apartments around landscaped courtyards that opened onto streets and provided additional light and air for a more densely laid-out building. The three-story apartment brick apartment building at 842-846 W. Newport was constructed in 1907 and is an example of the U-shaped plan.

Early Owners and Residents

The apartments, flats, and detached houses of the Newport Avenue District demonstrate the spectrum of housing options available to Chicago's working-class and emerging middle-class families around the turn of the 20th century. Families with modest incomes would typically live in apartments, while those with greater resources often lived in flats. The two-story greystone residence at 834 W. Newport, constructed in 1893, is a n example of the single-family homes that more prosperous individuals could occupy; its original owner, John E. Thompson, was a foreman at an iron works company, and lived here with his wife and three daughters.

By the 1890s, Newport Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood emerged as a flourishing community supporting numerous local merchants including grocers, butchers, and hardware dealers. Residents of the area had already established a wide variety of churches which became important community institutions; among them were St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church (1882) at Wellington and Lincoln, St. Luke Lutheran Church (1884) at Belmont and Greenview, and Elim Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church (1883) which once stood on Barry Avenue.

According to the United States Censuses conducted in 1900, 1910, and 1920, the residents of Newport Avenue were a mix of immigrant, first- and second-generation Americans, with Swedes and Germans forming the largest ethnic groups, followed by Irish, and English. Both Germans and Swedes were moving northward into Lake View from ethnic neighborhoods in the city's Near North side during this period. Immigrants as well as first-generation Americans, whose parents arrived in the city only years before, gained the economic resources to leave the overcrowded tenements and apartments in the center of the city and construct solid, finely-crafted homes in the District. According to historic accounts, by 1900 newly-arrived Swedish

immigrants went directly to Lake View, bypassing the city's original "Swede Town" on the Near North side.

The homes of the District were substantially built and occupied by families who regarded their home as a more-or-less permanent investment. City directories and census reports confirm that more than half of the homes in the Newport Avenue District were occupied by the original property owner for several years after purchasing the lot and constructing their home. Census reports from 1900 to 1920 show that the majority of the homes in the District were consistently owner occupied. With a high-quality apartment on each floor, flats provided property owners with a comfortable home and the opportunity to subsidize their mortgage payment by renting the other units or to house their extended family. Today, the residences of the District demonstrate how Chicago's neighborhoods were shaped by the stream of immigrants who made the city their home.

Finely-crafted two- and three-flat buildings were especially popular with the emerging middle-class families that settled on Newport Avenue. Built on narrow lots, the flat's efficient use of interior space allowed for a sufficient number of rooms to accommodate large families. Census records from 1900 show that the typical three-flat in the District was often home to three families, each of which contained four or more individuals. Additionally, members of extended families or even unrelated boarders frequently lived with a family. The ethnic character of the District is exemplified by the residents of the three-flat at 814 W. Newport where one flat was occupied by the building's owner William Young, a railroad clerk of German descent, and his family of four, while the other flats in the building were home to a Swiss family of four and an Irish family of six.

Throughout the first decades of the 20th century, the number of households grew dramatically as six-flats and apartment buildings were constructed on the block. According to the United States Census figures, approximately 132 families lived on Newport in 1900. Ten years later, in 1910, the number reached 163 households, and 212 households were present on Newport by 1920. Throughout its development, the ethnic make-up of the foreign-born residents of Newport Avenue remained predominately Swedish and German.

The earliest residents in the Newport Avenue District were German and Swedish immigrants. Top: The Bismark Garden, a German beer garden originally at Halsted and Grace (circa 1910). Above: Women working at a Swedish bakery, Hanna Persson's, located on N. Sheffield Ave. (circa 1930).

Criteria for Designation

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sec. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Newport Avenue District be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History

Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois or the United States.

- The Newport Avenue District exemplifies the high-quality working- and middle-class residential architecture constructed in Chicago's neighborhoods during the late 19th and early 20th centuries as the City expanded outward into once-suburban areas and as the number of working- and middle-class residents greatly increased.

- The Newport Avenue District represents the importance of the City's first- and second-generation immigrant families to the development of Chicago and its neighborhoods such as Lake View.

Criterion 4: Important Architecture

Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.

- The Newport Avenue District is a distinctive and remarkably intact group of small-scale "flat" architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

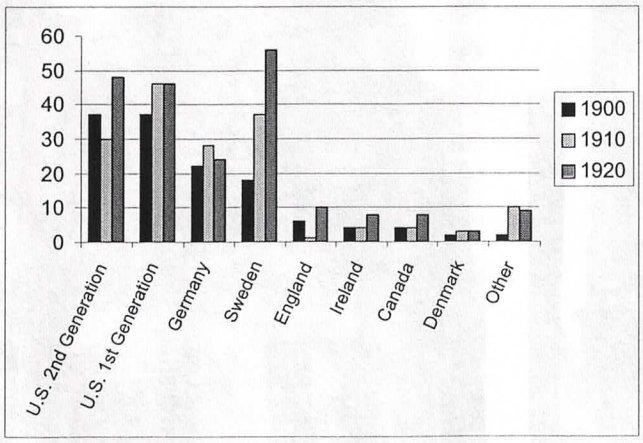
- The District is a visually consistent and unusual collection of Chicago three-flats, an important building type in the development of Chicago neighborhoods.

- The District is distinctive for the fine detailing and craftsmanship on its buildings' cornices, porches, windows and doors that impart Queen Anne, Eastlake, Romanesque, and Classical influences, and for the high-quality use of materials including brick and limestone.

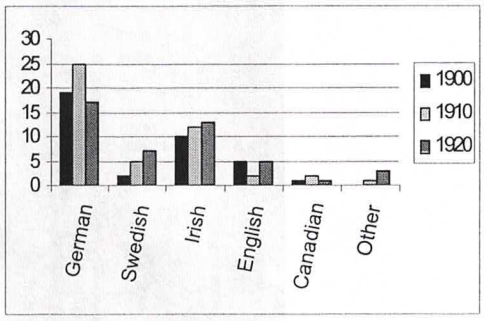
Source: United States Census Reports
Ethnicity of Heads of Household
on Newport Avenue 1900-1920

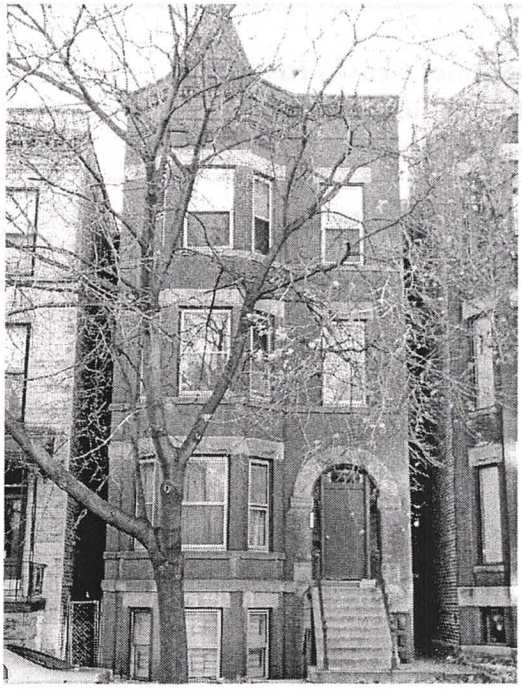
Country of Origin	1900	1910	1920
U.S. 2nd Generation	37	30	48
U.S. 1st Generation	37	46	46
Germany	22	28	24
Sweeden	18	37	56
England	6	1	10
Ireland	4	4	8
Canada	4	4	8
Denmark	2	3	3
Scotland	1	1	2
Switzerland	1	0	0
Norway	0	5	1
Austria	0	1	2
Finland	0	1	1
Greece	0	1	1
Poland	0	1	1
Italy	0	0	1
Total Households	**132**	**163**	**212**

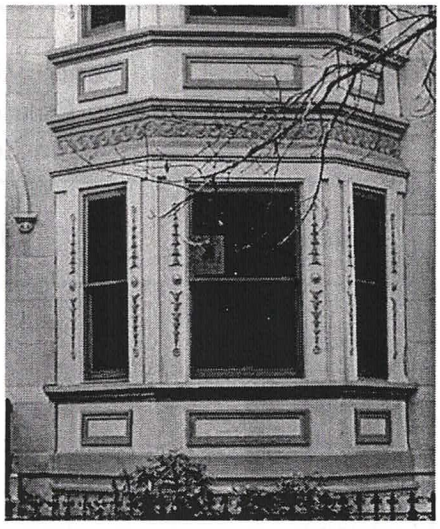
Immigration Data by Number of Households

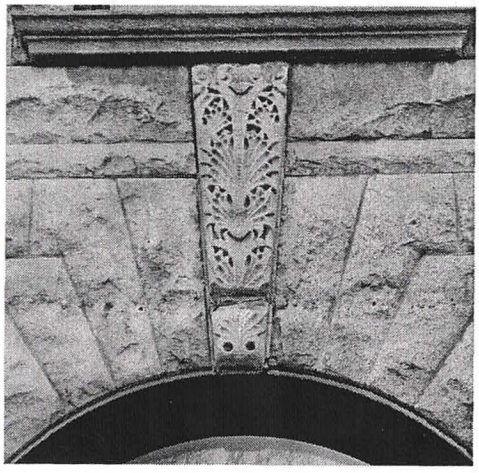


Ethnicity of First Generation Americans

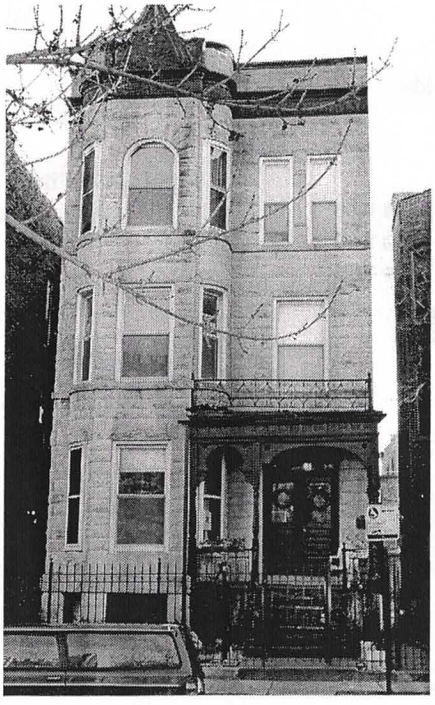








The Newport Avenue District is signficant for its small-scale residential buildings, especially three-flats, built with fine detailing and craftsmanship influenced by a variety of architectural styles.



Criterion 6: Distinctive Theme as a District

Its representation of an architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other theme expressed through distinctive areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, or other objects that may or may not be contiguous.

- The Newport Avenue District displays a distinct visual unity and streetscape based on a consistent scale, building setbacks, design, size, use of materials, and overall detailing.
- The Newport Avenue District creates a distinctive and recognizable sense of place within the larger Lake View neighborhood.

Integrity Criterion

The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architectural or aesthetic interest or value.

While intact residential buildings from the 1890s through the 1920s are found throughout Chicago, it is unusual to find a block-long collection of residences that combine the character and overall integrity in the manner that the Newport Avenue District possesses. More than 80 percent of the structures in the District were built during a relatively short period fifteen year period from 1891 to 1906. The remaining buildings were completed by 1928. The district demonstrates excellent integrity in both its overall streetscapes and individual buildings. The physical character of these buildings in terms of scale, setback from the street, entries, and general door and window configuration have remained consistent and work together to provide the onlooker with a strong sense of the overall character of the historic streetscapes.

Virtually all of the buildings retain the majority of the physical characteristics that define their historic significance. These include historic wall materials, including brick and stone, as well as fine architectural details such as pressed-metal bay windows, cornices, and gracious entries. Additionally, they continue to serve the same function a century or so after their construction with little discernable changes in style. Most importantly, the overall sense of place remains strong throughout the district.

Typical changes to buildings within the District include loss of cornices (a common alteration for 19th-century Chicago buildings) and replacement of window sash, doors, and porch elements. Some original double-hung window sash has been replaced with later double-hung or single-pane sash. Original wooden porch decks and stairs have been occasionally replaced with concrete, while original cast-iron railings have been replaced with later wrought iron. Two buildings in the District have had significant changes to cladding materials, but they remain potentially contributing.

The Newport Avenue District retains a high degree of overall physical integrity and the ability to express its historic community, architectural, and aesthetic value through its individual buildings

and the visually consistent way they relate to each other. The District's streetscapes are unusually coherent in scale, setback, use of traditional materials (brick, stone, wood, and metal) and historic ornamental styles.

Significant Historical and Architectural Features

Whenever a building is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based on its preliminary evaluation of the Newport Avenue District, the Commission staff recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- all exterior building elevations, including rooflines, visible from public rights-of-way.

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From *Swedish Chicago*: p. 19 (bottom).

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